

The Presence of the Holy Ghost on earth...

John 1:29-34

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the significance of Christ's various titles or names, the rejection of Christ by the world, and the work of Christ as the Lamb of God, resulting in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

Scripture: John 1:29

Topics: "The Holy Spirit", "Christ's Identity"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of the Holy Ghost's presence on earth, highlighting Christ's multifaceted identity as the Lamb of God and the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost. He explains that through Christ's work, believers are granted a relationship with God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, which allows them to experience divine love and grace. Darby contrasts the rejection of Christ by the world with the grace offered to those who accept Him, underscoring the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. He concludes by affirming that the Holy Ghost not only seals believers but also enables them to live in accordance with Christ's example, fostering a deep relationship with God as their Father.

Transcript

This chapter is remarkable inasmuch as it brings before us the various titles or names of Christ, almost all that He is in His varied titles, unless indeed the relative ones. You do not see Him as Head of the church, nor as priest, nor Christ; but you get Him as only-begotten Son of God, who reveals the Father, Son of and King of Israel, the Lamb of God, Life, the Light, the Word, the Creator, the Son of man, the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost, all the names that tell what He is in His own Person. In an abstract way you have what His nature is, His personality, light, life: only that, when John brings in man's condition with the testimony to what man is as rejecting Christ, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

The three other Gospels present Christ to man to be received, and close with His rejection, but this Gospel takes up His rejection from the very beginning, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not; he came to his own and his own received him not," and you then have what grace does and the objects of grace distinct. After the abstract statement of what He was comes the testimony, not of what Christ was, but what He became. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." There His Person, as incarnate, is brought out, not what He was abstractedly but "became flesh." Then, in the verses I read, you get His work. You have thus what He is essentially and in His nature, then what He became -

incarnation in a word, and also His revealing the Father - "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"; and also we receive of His fulness. He becomes the source, and He is the fulness of which we have all received; and then in the verses read we get the work of grace from the very starting-point of the Gospel.

101 You get this work in two parts; it is the second I shall chiefly speak of; but the first is Christ as the Lamb of God, and then He is the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost. It is not that He does not exercise also His priesthood - He does; but it is not the subject here. I guard this because it is important to remember that He is Priest. But here He is the Lamb of God, and He that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

This last is a wonderful expression, and contains in it the whole power of our relationship with God. It does not weaken the truth that He is the Lamb of God; yea, it is as to us founded on it. He is that, as is said in Genesis 22, "God will provide himself a lamb" - One therefore that is fit every way, perfectly acceptable and accepted, as perfect for the thing He had to do as God's mind was who gave Him to do it. The Son of God is the Lamb of God. Just as the first man brought in sin, so the second was to put it clean out of the way. Those who rejected Him, of course, as He said, died in their sins, but He is the One that takes away the sin of the world. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; that, and that only, will be the full result. The sacrifice has been made, the Lamb has been slain; but the grand result will be that God will have a heaven and an earth before Him in which there is not an atom of sin, but wherein shall dwell righteousness.

We had an innocent world, paradise: this was soon over; then a sinful world, though with grace working in it; but we shall have, not an innocent nor a sinful world, but a righteous world; and it will be founded on that which can never lose its value so that itself never can be touched. It is the immutable basis of God's new creation, which is therefore immutable in its blessings where all His ways are manifested. That will be the full result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first world was set in blessing, but it depended on the faithfulness of Him who was placed at the head of it; the final one rests secure on the value of that which is perfected, coming after a work finished and done, a work in which God has perfectly glorified Himself. The basis of the new creation on which it is founded is finished, finished completely and absolutely.

The work upon which the security (morally speaking) of the new heavens and the new earth is founded is finished - finished so that Christ who wrought it is sitting at the right hand of God, and sits there until His enemies are to be dealt with. The work is finished, nothing can ever be added to it, nor can it lose its effect with God; and the blessed result is that which will come in as I have said. The work is done: all moral questions have been settled at the cross, what sin is, enmity against God, what perfect love to God the Father and obedience in man to Him is, what righteousness against sin is, what love to sinners, have all been shewn in the same wondrous work. Unless in the cross, men try in vain to reconcile righteousness and love, love and God's dishonoured majesty, truth as to the wages of sin, and His goodness - all the attributes together.

102 If Adam and Eve had been cut off when they ate the fruit, it might be quite righteous (you might say they got what they deserved), but there would have been no love in that. Or suppose, on the other hand, every sin had been passed over, what people call goodness - the natural man would think this very right and call it love, but then sin would be no matter, and righteousness not exist; and so the majesty of God, which has been utterly trampled in the dust by the success of Satan with man, must remain so cast down; there would be no means of conciliating the righteousness and majesty of God with His love.

The moment I get the cross, all that is settled; it became Him; it became God, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering - that became God. His majesty is maintained in the highest way. The Son must suffer if He takes up this cause. Then I find perfect righteousness against sin, but along with it infinite love to me, a poor worthless sinner. There I get, consequently, the Son of man glorified and God glorified in Him, and all moral questions in presence of God's revealed nature settled for ever. All is perfectly settled according to God's nature and for God, and by that which passed between God and Christ alone, perfect consequently according to their perfection. As to myself, if I look at the cross, I say, the only part I had in it was my sins and the enmity that crucified Christ. I am put in my place and humbled, and yet I see the great righteous basis of all-divine counsels in it and infinite love to me; but this brings me to know myself too. Nothing ever shewed like the cross the full development and manifestation of evil. Let people say what they like, the perfect development of evil was there on our part, and the full development of good before and from God.

103 When I look at the present effect of all that in this scene, in a broad sense there is none. The scene is not changed, looking as the general state of things. Christ has gone to heaven when He had by Himself purged our sins; but as to the state of the world at large there is no effect, though many souls are saved. You get new forms of evil - infidelity as to this love and righteousness, and so on; but as to the state of the world, it remains in the same state, modified only by the rejection of Christ. Sin has not gone out of the world; men are trying to bind it and restrain evil, as of old they bound Legion with fetters and chains; they have set to do their best, and a bad set-to it is, but there it is, to be bound. They talk of progress, and in a certain way, as to physical discoveries and conveniences, there is; but is there morally? I do not see any progress in the obedience of children, nor in the devotedness of servants, nor in faithfulness in all the relationships of life; but I see wonderful restlessness, and greater than ever.

There is progress in railways and telegraphs, and so on, or we might not have been here together as we are; but that has nothing whatever to do with the relationship of man to God or to his neighbour. Cleverness in what is merely material is neither here nor there as to moral state: you might get the cleverest man in telegraphs or science, and find he was a blasphemer or a man walking near to God; it has nothing to do with it. And, after all, when you die, what will it be to you whether there is a telegraph or not? The soul's state belongs to another sphere of things, save as it ministers to his will and lusts, in which good and evil are brought to an issue through the cross and God revealed in grace and righteousness, perfectly glorified (as indeed there only) as well as our sins borne. The work is all done and finished on the cross, and accepted too in righteousness; and Christ is sitting down at the right hand of God until He takes His great power and reigns. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, He will reign until all His enemies are put under His feet, and blessedness is complete in a new heaven and a new earth.

But then I get a second thing, which is that in order to do all this He became a man, and, consequent upon His going up to God, risen from the dead, the Holy Ghost is now come down. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is consequent upon Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God. His presence here is that which puts a man down here who has the Holy Ghost into association and relation with Christ in heaven. And so, further, you get the great truth that God now dwells down here on earth. And this is an immense truth; it never was the case before redemption. God never dwelt with Adam though He came down to visit him innocent, nor with Abraham. But the moment that Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, He says, in Exodus 29:45, 46, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God, and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them." And all this was written for our admonition, and God shewed Himself in the shekinah glory of the

tabernacle dwelling between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat.

104 Now, however, it is the Holy Ghost who is come down, and who dwells either in the individual believer or in the assembly of God, the temple of the living God; and the consequence of this to me is that I have the knowledge of the whole value of the work that is done, and I have got, through the Holy Ghost here, complete and entire association with Christ where He is, and I rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Until that comes, God dwells already in those who believe in Christ. Mark how it comes in; He was anointed with the Holy Ghost; "And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." Before I get the baptising (Christ is not said to be baptised but anointed and sealed) on the day of Pentecost, Christ had been anointed and sealed. He had taken this place as a man, as the pattern of it all; as Son, as a man here, the place into which He introduces us by redemption, the relationship in which He is with the Father and into which He introduces us.

Is Christ alive for evermore? Well, He is our life. Is He righteousness? He is my righteousness; and, though all the results are not yet accomplished, we have certain knowledge of the work He wrought, and we now rejoice in hope of the glory. The heaven was opened, the Holy Ghost came down like a dove, and Christ took this place amongst us, the Son of God amongst men - us - Himself the expression of the place into which God by grace brings everyone that believes on Christ. You read in Proverbs 8, "I was daily his delight rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." And when the Lord Jesus Christ became a man, or the Word became flesh, as set out in this chapter, we get the angels declaring God's predilection as to the race of men: is it not beautiful to hear them, with unjealous hearts, delighting in God's glory, announcing the blessing to others: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in man"?

105 I speak of the thing in itself, not of the accomplishment of the results, for the present effect was not peace but division; but, when His people take the first step in the right path in obedience to the word, He falls in with them, they indeed confessing sin, He fulfilling righteousness. And thus, at His baptism I get the blessed Lord, coming as a man, as He did publicly then, in full obedience, entering by the door; and He then receives the Holy Ghost, who comes down on Him as such. And how could He receive the Holy Ghost? Because He was righteous in Himself, and we through His work. He was both anointed and sealed, and thus we find Him attributing His works to the Spirit: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils." It is remarkable how the Trinity is brought before us in this. The Son wrought on earth, cast out demons by the Spirit, and the Father that dwelt in Him, He did the works. His work shewed how the Trinity is brought out in specific connection with that purpose in man, through which the Son became man. It is first fully revealed in the passage in Matthew 3. Christ the Son was there, the Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father owns Him, a man on the earth, as Son. So through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, says Peter, with the Holy Ghost and with power.

I notice all this to shew how He who was God over all, blessed for ever, took, in sovereign grace, His part with man. This was the great preliminary path to all blessing. He upon whom the Holy Ghost descended and abode, He it was who baptised with it: not that it was only this, for we must be sprinkled with blood to have it, and He must be glorified as man to give it. Hence, we read, He being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, hath shed forth this. But here He entered truthfully on the path of all this, He associated Himself with the godly remnant, Himself to be the channel, through redemption, of His own blessings to others. Thus Christ was anointed as man and was baptised with the Holy Ghost. We enter into the intelligent place of the blessings which are ours in Him

before the accomplishment of the result. We are brought into the same place and relationship, and know the fruit of His being the Lamb before the results are actually produced externally.

106 But, further, before we arrive at the glory, He is entered as man, He is glorified, and so I get an object; I rest in the thought of being glorified with Him, but I cannot rest in myself. I look all around in the world and try everything in it; but Christ says "Are you weary of all that?" "Yes." "Then you come to Me and you shall find rest." There is that which gives the heart rest. You may be weary and heavy laden without being able to explain it; now, are you that? Christ is the true rest. God found His rest in Him, and never anywhere else. God could not rest even in the exercise of His love, or any object till Christ was there. He could exercise His love, but not rest in it; but in Christ God did find His rest. I do not talk of His own blessed nature, of course, sufficient to itself; but never anywhere else here could God find rest. And so can I a poor wretched creature, a vile sinner. Well, come, see a man that told me all that ever I did, and this is the One who can be my rest, for He knows all and is perfect love and grace to me when He does. As an object I have nothing more to seek, I have found my rest where God found His, and I have found God Himself in love. As to my circumstances and sinfulness, I find a full discovery of all that, and at the same time in the Lamb of God, who meets it all and puts it all away for ever; and so through Christ I know God. Very glad I am that God does know all. Thus all was in that which He did, and now I can have truth in the inward parts in God's presence. Take the poor woman in the city that was a sinner: the Pharisee says, "If he knew what she was, he would not let her touch him; he is no prophet," but Christ shews He was a prophet, for He tells out what was passing in Simon's heart. He did know all: but there was that which Simon did not know, the perfect grace of God towards the sinner; and then He takes up the poor woman's case, and says to her, "thy sins are forgiven"; "thy faith hath saved thee" (this goes farther), "go in peace."

107 We have the real declaration of the Father in Christ, and His love shewn by the work in which righteousness was established: I find the perfect love of God, honesty in the conscience and heart by the knowledge of it, and I find these nowhere else. I can find no person that is perfect in searching my heart out to the bottom, and with perfect love to me, and that has the right to be perfect love to me. But I have got all that in Christ. I find this blessed One, the perfect sinless Man, and Him sealed with the Holy Ghost that I might understand He so came, and that I might be sealed with the Holy Ghost through the work that He has accomplished.

If an angel wanted to see God, he must look on Man, on Christ, "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Then, with all this goodness towards us, where has this Man gone, the One who glorified God perfectly in the place of sin? He was God, manifested in love to man; and if you have not yet got the blessing of it, still it was God coming to win back the confidence of your heart to God.

The beginning of all sin was loss of confidence in God. The devil suggests to Eve, "Why should God keep back the fruit of that tree? He knows if you eat it, you will be like Him"; and so confidence was lost. But, if I do not trust God to make me happy, I must try and make myself happy; and thus enter lust and sin and transgression and ruin. But Christ comes into this world where I am a sinner, and in Him I get God winning back my heart to Himself, not by hiding my faults - I get them all told out and put away - and the confidence of my heart won, so that I can trust God; and more, I know God's heart a great deal better than I know my own. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Test it: I say I love the brethren; but am I not cold sometimes? I have a double heart (I do not say wilfully but there it is); and I must humble myself before God about it, but I cannot deny it. Do you find anything like that in God? I find the perfect love of God in the gift of His Son, and there is no double heart there. And so I get rest. If our heart condemn us not, then

have we confidence before God.

But this is not all. If Christ was the manifestation of God in love to us, He was man made sin before God, and if, won by His grace to confide in God, you set out towards God, you will find the cross in the way, Man made sin before God; but then the whole question settled there, and, coming by faith, the question settled for me touching all my sins in His presence, settled by what is done and finished, and that according to the glory of God's own nature; so that I can even look sin in the face fully, and find it has been judged for me, while also I have the perfect love of God resting on me in perfect holiness and righteousness, and I am standing in the light as God is in the light in virtue of that which is finished. Through Christ I am brought into God's presence, accepted in the Beloved, as white as snow, while God is perfect in righteousness in accepting me, and grace reigns through righteousness.

108 Thus it is we get the double character of Christ manifested down here: God in grace towards us; and man made sin before God, but as putting it away for us by His work in drinking the cup His Father had given Him to drink; and, mark, the only part that we have in that work is the sins that put Him to death; and the hatred that did it, when He gave Himself up to it in love. But this is all finished; and when Christ had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high; and thereupon not only is it the fact that the Holy Ghost comes down, but Christ receives it again, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And I find this, that in virtue of that work of putting away my sins, and having cleansed me and washed me and justified me and redeemed me to God, the Holy Ghost also is given that I may go and understand and enjoy all that Christ is, all that Christ has done, and that He has made my portion in consequence. True, I am here in weakness, a poor earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God; all quite true. But I have the relationship. I am a child, I want to be taught by my Father; and alas! it may be sometimes a naughty child and I want to be whipped by my Father, but I am a child, a partaker of the divine nature.

Now, it is this distinctive character of the Holy Ghost come down that I want to speak of. It is what constitutes the state of the Christian. He is a man who stands between the first coming of Christ (and the work He then accomplished) and the second coming of Christ, when he is going to enjoy the glory; and, between these two, he has the Holy Ghost. He has all the benefits, not as to his body but as to his standing before God, of Christ's work. Look a little at that.

109 Him that has taken this place, as now redeemed - I speak of those who are believers - the Holy Ghost is come down to dwell in. You get it in the figures. When the leper was cleansed, he was washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil (the figure of the Holy Ghost): the word of God applied to us in the power of the Spirit, the water - the blood, now the blood of atonement - and the anointing. Being quickened, born again of water by the word, must go first; and then the blood; but the Holy Ghost is there too, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. Just trace that a little.

The first thing I find in the third chapter of this Gospel is, we are born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; and in that I get an immense truth that I have a nature capable of enjoying all divine things, which the flesh is not. I have often said, if you put a natural man into heaven, he would get out of it as fast as he could; there is nothing there that he likes: even an honest worldly man will own that. Then in John 4 there is another thing: Christ speaks of the gift of God which should be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. It is not only life holy in its nature, but, in consequence of the Lord Jesus Christ having gone up, I have the whole power of life there, and I go right up into its blessed results, through the

Lord Jesus Christ, who has associated my heart livingly as born of God with all the things that belong to one born of God; with that of which he that is born of God is joint-heir with Christ.

He became a man, and will be a man for ever. In one sense He will be a servant for ever. In Exodus 21 a Hebrew slave who had served seven years was to go out free; but if his master had given him a wife, and he said, I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go out free, then his master was to bore through his ear with an awl to the door post, and the slave was to remain so for ever. Now the Lord could have had twelve legions of angels, and gone out free. But He would not, and so He is a servant and remains so for ever. In John 13, "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, and that he was come from God and went to God, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"; and, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garment, and took a towel and girded himself; after that, he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." He would still be a servant, could no longer (it is true) have part down here with them; but He would not give them up, and so they must have part with Him. They were clean by the word spoken, but in their path could pick up dirt. Dirty feet will not do for heaven, and the blessed Lord still does the work of a servant. I, says He, am going to wash them. Peter hesitates, and the Lord says, If I do not wash thee, thou hast no part with Me. You are clean, but you are taking up dirt on your feet in the way; and so the Lord washes them. This is His present service. And in Luke 12 He says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." As if the Lord should say, "I am going to be your servant in heaven." We are going to sit down and eat things in heaven which acquire infinite value from His ministering them to us.

110 The next thing is a clear distinct consciousness that the work is finished. The Holy Ghost is sent down from Christ when He is glorified and God has given the positive testimony that He has accepted the work and of that to which it leads. Christ has gone into the glory, and I am going to be like Him, and thus I get the blessed assurance of the efficacy of His work when He came first. He says, "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." No question about that. He came to be a man, all alone, however, amongst men, and ever accessible until He had redeemed us, and now He has taken us into association with Himself, and I know it by the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost also I know that I am in Him there now, as John 14:20. We have not yet got all the fruits, but I have the knowledge of the fruits of what He has done by the Holy Ghost. In John 14 He says, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." This was the first great point and final result in blessing.

3 Then He shews them what they should have upon earth, meanwhile. They knew where He was going and the way, for He was going to the Father, and they had seen the Father in Him. The revelation of the Father in the Son gave that which was the highest heavenly blessedness, was the full revelation of all the blessedness that is to be theirs, and revealed the way, because in coming to Christ they had found the Father. Philip says, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And now I know what the springs of blessedness are in heaven, because I have seen the Father in the Son. Do not believe for a moment that God has not revealed the things He has prepared for us. "God hath revealed

them unto us by his Spirit," and "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

I find thus the Father revealed in the Son, but there was yet more present comfort by the Holy Ghost. They ought to have known the revelation of the Father in the Son, but one thing they could not know until the Comforter was come, and "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you." You shall know that you are in Me. People tell me I cannot know, that I must wait until the day of judgment; but in that case I cannot have any peace here because I do not know how it will turn out then. Am I not to have part in the day of grace? and that is now. And what it is that I have? What I really have is that Christ has put away the very sins for which otherwise I should have to be judged. And more, I know that I am in Him, and He is in me. But men say it is so presumptuous to say I am in Christ. Presumptuous! why, Christ told me I should know it; very much more presumptuous to doubt it.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And do you think God dwells in me without my finding it out? I may not be able to explain it to another: that is a question of intelligence in Scripture and even of gift; but "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The Holy Ghost dwells in us, and there is the power to overcome temptation, wisdom from God, power to realise the presence of Christ, to live looking on the things that are not seen, joyful liberty in our path with God. Mark the practical consequence of this knowledge as to the character of our walk. I say I am in Christ; but you cannot be in Christ without Christ being in you: then do not let me see anything else in you but Christ; do not let the flesh come out. We fail, I know, but that is the right practical consequence. So what is to be looked for in the Christian is that he is to be the epistle of Christ. This is my place, and the practical measure of my walk is that I am dead and the power of the Holy Ghost within so full that nothing but Christ is seen. We are in Christ and Christ in us.

112 And consequently there is another thing. If I am asked to prove the love of God, I say, "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us," but, as to enjoying it, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." I know the love of God, by His dwelling in me who is love: God is love, and the Holy Ghost dwells in me. Not that you cannot learn more, infinitely more. I know my Father, but there are ten thousand things in His mind that I do not know yet. For a man to say that he does not know his own father would be dreadful, though there are multitudes of things in his father's mind and character that he may not yet know. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "I am in the Father," that is Christ's own place, "and we are in Christ." This is not only the fact of acceptance but relationship, for we are sons. And the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of it. And what do all duties flow from? Relationship. You cannot have the holy affections and true duties of a child of God without being a child of God, and knowing that you are one. The Spirit of God "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," and so I enjoy the affections which belong to a child.

Now is that connected with coming before God as a Judge? It is, in virtue of Christ's work, which put away my sins; I am a child in virtue of that which has made me as white as snow. True, if I merely take a cold dead sense that I am safe, there is no affection in that. But our relationship with God and our Father is identified with our being safe. Christ's death for me is, indeed, a motive to make me feel thankful beyond all expression. But there is beyond this as present power that we are taken into an association with Christ, which is so complete, that we know - know now - that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we

shall see him as he is." He would not leave us without our knowing His love perfectly in the way that He has established me in blessing; and, while I have the perception of the glory and the earnest of the inheritance, the love of God is already shed abroad in my heart; the Holy Ghost dwells in me and gives me consciousness of all that has been done for me, of all that has been given to me.

113 And if this is true, if I have indeed come to Christ and drunk, then out of my belly shall flow rivers of living water - flow out, that is, to others. God first gives us to enjoy Himself: "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and then there is the activity of His love reproduced in our little measure, though in the truth of its nature in us.

"You know Me?" He says. "Oh, yes," I say. How do you know it? "Because I was a poor vile sinner, and Christ came and laid down His life for me." "You know that? Then go and carry it to other people." I was a poor sinner, and am made the righteousness of God in Christ. Think what a blessed place that is! And I have that blessed place before God, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and in spirit I can now enjoy it, and that is the place I get with God: as a son, as Christ is Son; as to relationship with the Father, "my Father and your Father." And then He gives me a share in the activity of His love in carrying it out to others. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Plainly this is not the Spirit as He wrought in them to make them believe, it is clear, for those who believed should receive Him; but, in virtue of the work of Christ gone into the glory, the Holy Ghost has come down and associated me with Christ in all that He has as man, and then sends me to bear witness to others of it.

But if He takes the things of Christ and shews them to me, what is the effect on me as I pass through this world? "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now"; and, "we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body." What was Christ in this world? and what does He feel about this world? Could He set it to rights? He could not. If He was love, could He look with indifference at its misery? Neither was that possible. His holiness and His love must be sources of sorrow in this world, as of blessed communion above whilst He was here. Having the Spirit of Christ I may be privileged to suffer for Him, I must suffer with Him; my heart takes up the voice of the groans of creation and carries them up to God. I may not know what to ask for as a remedy: there may be none here. But being here with the spring of divine love in me, the mind of the Spirit is there, the Holy Ghost intercedes in me according to God. It shews what an astonishing place we are in, what a wonderfully blessed place God has put us into while not yet in the glory.

114 Again, the Holy Ghost having sealed my pardon and given me the consciousness of my relationship as a son, with all that I am walking in in spirit, I turn to see the full effect before the glory which He has revealed to me is mine in possession. The Holy Ghost cannot reveal a glory to me which He does not reveal as mine; but these glories are given us because we are sons and are joint-heirs with Christ. We are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"; and, whatever the Holy Ghost has revealed of all this blessedness, He reports it to me as mine. "To the glory of God by us," it is said, and again, "which God ordained before the world to our glory." 1 Peter 1:10-13 shews very clearly the order of the revelation of all this. The prophets of old "searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves" (not that they will not be there, but their actual condition is what he is speaking of) "but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." We have them not yet, but they are revealed and reported to us. Then "gird up the loins of your

mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The Holy Ghost has been sent from heaven for the purpose of this revelation. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." The apostle does not quote the passage to shew it is our position, as so often quoted, but exactly the contrary. Such was the Old Testament state, but we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. I have got into the relationship of a son and I know it by the Holy Ghost. My chief joy surely is fellowship with the Father and the Son, and this hereafter in glory in the Father's house. Do we know nothing of what is there? Much, in one sense everything; it is revealed; but take yet another blessing besides God's presence. The Holy Ghost shews me another thing: there is not one of you that I shall not see perfectly like Christ in the glory. The Lord Jesus "shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe." Think of my seeing Christ admired in all of you!

115 What is my desire now? That you may be like Him. That desire will be satisfied perfectly, and it is an immense joy. Nothing is too great for us to expect, now that we know that the blessed Son of God has suffered for us and been made sin. And see the way that Christ gives: Not as the world giveth give I unto you. The world gives, gives away: Christ never gives away. The way He gives is to take us into the enjoyment of all that He has Himself. He wants to have us in the same blessedness with Himself. "Peace I leave unto you, my peace I give unto you." He says, "My joy fulfilled in themselves." He says, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me," and "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them," and "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them"; but the way of it is, He has brought us into the joy of relationship to the Father with Himself. It is the Giver that makes the blessedness even more than the gift. Suppose my mother gives me a trifle: it is not the value of the trifle in itself, but the giver that makes the value.

And I know all now by the Holy Ghost, so that I abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. There are two kinds of happiness. There is the happiness of hope that we have; and what is the other kind? Rest in perfect affection; God loves me as He loves Jesus, and I rest in that. To talk about our love to anyone is no proof of love. The deepest affection may shew itself, but is not loquacious about itself, at least when it confides in its object; nor is the declaration of our great love a proof that all love much, nor complaint of our want of affection a proof that love is wanting, though it may be often that we are thinking too much about it. If there be confidence, the heart rests in the value of the love of the one confided in, and rests in thinking of its object, which is true affection. Supposing a child told me, "I love my mother quite enough," I say, "You are an unfortunate wight; you do not love your mother a bit if you say that." But suppose a child says, If you only knew my mother, her unwearied love, her patience with me, and I often so foolish, forgetting her wishes! I made a noise when she was sick, and yet her love never falters, never wearies; I say, That child loves its mother. When I have a sense of the love that outreaches all my thoughts, and thank and bless and wonder and adore at its greatness, and in the sense of it, my heart thinking of Him - that is love to God. But, if I look into my own heart (I do not speak of judging known failure) and measure my love, and complain of my not loving God, in such case you are under law as to it. The law required it, and necessarily and rightly: but that is law. "Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us." Hence too, when our loving Him is spoken of in 1 John 4, it is not said we ought to love Him, true as it may be, but we love Him because He first loved us.

116 Well now, the practical effect of receiving the Holy Ghost and abiding in Him is that I am called upon to walk as Christ walked: "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." You cannot have a man living without an object, and whatever the object may be, it characterises him: if it is money, he is a covetous man; if it is power, he is ambitious, and so on; but if I get Christ the object of my love, I follow Him, and the Holy Ghost reveals to my heart all things that relate to Him.

You cannot have the love of Christ in your heart without loving what He loves, and this not only as to the things the heart delights in, but the persons dear to Him. We shall love all saints, even if going astray, with the patient love with which Christ loves them, if filled with His Spirit, while walking with Him in the joy of communion.

See the apostle in the opening of 1 Corinthians. When he saw them at Corinth all going wrong, he begins by saying all the good things about them he can: "enriched" by him in "all utterance" and all knowledge, coming behind in no gift, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," who would confirm them, to the end that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God was faithful, and so on. And then he begins to blame them for everything they were doing. Men falsely suppose that the full assurance of salvation, and of final salvation, weakens the bond of duty. First, it is a base principle that only dread of damnation can keep us in the path of duty. But further, a child's duties are always there because he is always a child and never can be anything else. All duties flow from the place you are in. You can speak of duties only in the relationship from which they flow. You must be a Christian, a child of God, to be under obligation to fulfil the duties incumbent on such. And, indeed, the affections belonging to their relationship also have no place till then. The consciousness of the relationship must be there. How can a child love a father if he does not know whether he is such? "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

117 Scripture does not recognise as a Christian a person who does not understand that he is a child of God; he may be on the road, but he has not arrived at his Christian standing. I want no self-confidence, but I want honesty - a divinely given recognition of the relationship in which God has set us, and of which we have the consciousness by the Spirit. In vain we pretend to such a place by merely seeing what Scripture says about it. I would rather see anxiety for holiness and God's glory in a person who had not got assurance, but who was in earnest, than confidence in one who was careless. I quite understand how many dear souls regard this as presumption; I remember when I was awfully afraid myself. But what Scripture tells me is, "we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Being children, we are not to be looking up to God as a judge. I am not thinking of God that way; He is one, of course, but that is not my habit of thought about Him. The very person, who is presently to sit as Judge, has hung on the cross for my sins, and put them away, before He is Judge. God would have us before Him in reverence surely, but not in terror. I come to Him as a Saviour, and I find the sins I should have had to be judged for have all been judged already; and when I come before Christ on the judgment-seat, as we shall, why, there, as the Judge, is the very One who has put them all away! How can He impute them to me? We must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ; quite true, but remember we shall all be glorified before we go there. We shall be raised in glory if we have died, or changed into the same if yet alive, as it is written, "our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

118 One word more. How far, beloved friends, how far, knowing I am a child and that here, and in a path according to God's will, led by the Spirit of God - how far can I at present look to be like to Christ in this world? I look to be quite like Him in the glory. There is a great deal, and among true souls too, of looking to be conformed to the image of God's Son now. Now there is utter deadly error in that, though not intentional error. They reason, from the desire of uniformity in the renewed soul, to the possibility of it by faith. But this leaves the truth of God out of sight. If I say I have no sin, I deceive myself; but Christ had no sin. Have you no sin in you? It is not said that we ought to be like Christ down here, but that we ought to walk as He walked.

Again, when I come to know redemption in Christ - and only thus, for this is properly deliverance, having died and risen with Christ, not merely knowing that He has borne my sins - then "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The word "free" has two senses in our language: one, as when you say "that horse is free from vice," that is, he has none; and the other, as when you say, "that slave is free," which is quite a different thing, and it is in this sense I am free from the law of sin and death. I find sin is in me, though it was all condemned on the cross of Christ, but I am free from its law, and it is by the knowledge of redemption and deliverance that I get into this liberty.

Who shall deliver me! Why do you not deliver yourself? I have been trying at it, but I cannot. I do not submit to the condemnation of sin in the flesh, so as to understand that it was put to death on the cross; I do not come to that, until I find I cannot myself get the better of it. You get all this in Romans 7. It is not the true Christian state, but the one there finds first that there is no good thing in his flesh at all. And what next? Why, that it is not himself, "it is no more I." What next? Oh, I must get the better of it. Try away, I say, try away. I cannot succeed. And now you learn that there is no power in yourself to do it. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." I need another, a deliverer, and I learn the power of life in Christ, of Christ Himself; but with the knowledge that I have (as regards the old man) died with Him, and that there sin in the flesh was condemned when He was a sacrifice for sin, but that it was in death, so that I am dead to it for faith. And I do not believe as I have said, that a person has ever got out of Romans 7 who has not got into it. In my case, like thousands of others, before I got forgiveness, I had found out what I was; I learned the seventh before I learned the third. But when a full gospel is preached and forgiveness known, the knowledge of self will still be by law, but the form of it is modified. The way more often is, "I hope I am not deceiving myself; I thought I was forgiven. How is it I do so-and-so? how is it I find this power of sin still here?" The flesh is never changed. The truth is they are distinct points, and treated apart; only self-knowledge is the deeper point, and so treated last. But it is law, not for condemnation, but powerless to free, though it may kill and condemn too. (Compare 2 Corinthians 3.)

119 After man was made, the whole history is, whatever God sets up right, the first thing man did was to spoil it. Adam eats the fruit of the tree. Noah is put in authority, and the first thing he does is to get drunk. God gives a law, and they set up a golden calf. The priests are consecrated and offer strange fire the first day, and die; and Aaron is never allowed to go in his garments of glory and beauty into the most holy place. Solomon fails in the kingdom and it is divided. Nebuchadnezzar is set at the head of the government among the Gentiles, and he sets up a great idol and punishes those that serve the true God, and Gentile authority becomes that of the beasts. It put Christ to death when He came in grace, lusts against the Spirit where He is, and, if one is called to the third heaven, would puff him up about it. And, now, it is not that there is any change in the flesh; but I am not to fancy, that, because flesh is there, I must let it act. No, I must reckon it dead, and should in practice "always bear about in the body the dying of the

Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

120 The Holy Ghost gives us a blessed sense of relationship with the Father; and what, accordingly, you are called upon to do is, in the power of the Holy Ghost, so to live and walk as that nothing but Christ be seen in you.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/the-presence-of-the-holy-ghost-on-earth-john-129-34/>

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